

Blaxhall

Village Newsletter



Spring 2021

New Horizons ...



Last minute calamities notwithstanding, we're finally on the verge of a 'Normal' Blaxhall (if that's not a contradiction in terms!). The Fete is due to return in August, while plans for the Festival are in their final stages; this year's theme - Football Clubs of Britain and Europe - has set an interesting challenge for our flower arrangers, but should make for some great displays and prove popular with younger visitors. Meanwhile, The Ship is once again open for business and sporting a splendid new rear (see p3). Staying with ships, some readers may already be aware that Blaxhall has a hi-tech new recruit in its ongoing battle against the waves, in the form of a flood patrol



vessel, seen here assessing the situation at the regular site of flooding near the rectory. For more on our brave little boat, including the chance to name her, turn to page 6.

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Project Update

Following receipt of a grant from Historic England's Covid Recovery Fund we have been able to start the work on the south wall of the Nave which should hopefully be completed by the end of June. The aim of the work is to secure and stabilise the wall and finish in a traditional manner to improve the 'breathability' of the building thus reducing long-standing problems of damp. This will complete the first phase of essential works to keep the church free of damp. All the cement render has been removed to reveal a wall consisting of brick, stone and flint. Repairs to the fabric are under way, under the guidance of our architect, and will be completed by the application of traditional lime render. The various materials used in the wall results in an undulating surface such that the render will be applied either in solid sections completely covering stonework or graduated pointing so that as much flint as possible remains exposed. The finished result will look different to the adjacent Chancel wall but this is not surprising in a church which has a varied architectural history.

The PCC will next consider the Tower where much needed work has been identified by the architect. The intention is to commission a report from a structural engineer to determine the most serious defects which must be addressed for the essential safety of the structure – and to get the bells ringing again as soon as possible!

We hope that the continued easing of Covid restrictions will mean that our programme of regular fund raising events will be able to re-start soon and the PCC will continue to explore grant funding opportunities in order to complete necessary works.

It's Festival Time!

Who needs Glastonbury and Latitude when we've got "business-as-usual" BLAXHALL???

St Peter's Festival 26/27 June is scheduled to go ahead (Covid permitting) and is calculated to raise even more eyebrows than usual with its innovative theme of: "Football Clubs of Britain and Europe"!

What on earth do flowers and football have in common, you may ask. Well, you'll have to come and see for yourself; and while you're about it what about volunteering to help with one of the events during the weekend? All offers of help to: miranda@thesummerhouseinsnape.co.uk

In case of government intervention, see the Blaxhall website:..... for updates. See you there festival goers!



Parish Council

Life is beginning to return to normal as everything begins to open up with the reduction of Covid. Despite the unusually cold spring people have been enjoying a pint outside the pub and now at last we can go inside in the warm, of course it will now get very hot outside.

With spring comes the inevitable increase in farm traffic and tractors through the village seem to be top of most folks complaints. Machinery has got larger and faster over the years as the legal limits change so seem to have more impact on our lives. Whilst most tractors go through the village at 30mph this seems far too fast and these large vehicles appear daunting. Many tractor drivers do drive responsibly but the few that don't cause much anger from us all, so the Parish Council is writing to all farmers to ask them for their help. Just berating the farmers will not solve the problems as the worst culprits are contractors who are not directly employed by the farm. These are often young, time pressed and less considerate drivers.

We have asked farmers for their help to find a solution.

If we all put our heads together in a positive frame of mind, we might just find that we can reduce the problems.

Whilst accepting that farming is vitally important, so is the quality of life for Blaxhall residents.

Graham

Village Hall & Playing Field

The Village Hall is now open so let's make best use of it. It's a lovely hall for small or large groups and very reasonable to hire. To book the Hall please ring Joyce 688452

Blaxhall Fete 14th August 2021

It was a great disappointment that we were forced to cancel the Fete last year. So, Covid rules permitting, let's make 2021 bigger and better than ever.

What we need

Helpers, if all of you that have helped or taken part before could contact Graham 688192 or Sheila 688178 to confirm you can do the same again that would be great.

New helpers, we need plenty both on the day and beforehand, erecting marquees, putting out signs and general help on the day.

Does anyone have any new ideas? Would you like to come along with a new stall?

Raffle prizes. The better the prizes the more tickets we sell. Do you know or have contacts with businesses who may be prepared to donate a prize? All businesses will be acknowledged on the day.

All proceeds from the Fete are shared between the Church and the Village Hall & Playing field, both of which are fund raising for major projects at the moment.

Graham & Naomi

The Ship



As we write this we have forgotten how many different various states of Co Vid 19 regulations we have operated under. Hopefully we are in the final set of regulations prior to returning to normality We would like to thank all our customers who have supported us since reopening in April.

We are pleased to have opened our covered-in outside areas, these were opened just prior to April 12th.

A big thank you to 2 stalwarts that worked tirelessly on this

project, Terry Davey and Graham Bowles. Also thanks to Chris Smith for his supporting role.

At time of writing we have had 2 successful musical events outside, with a summer of performances to follow. Forthcoming events; Peter Hepworth 13th June, Mambo Jambo 18th July. More dates to follow. Any suggestions for future events just let us know. We are hoping to have an October Beer Fest. Let's hope the weather improves in the coming weeks.

Mags Ken and Dwayne



History at the Blaxhall Festival

As mentioned earlier in the newsletter, the 2021 Blaxhall Festival is almost upon us. In addition to the many events at the church there are plans in the pipework to display a variety of archive material in the village hall. Whilst nothing is yet confirmed, it is hoped this will include a feature on Blaxhall artist George Thomas Rope, archive photographs and genealogical information on historical Blaxhall families and residents.

Born in Blaxhall on 11th February 1846, George T. Rope suffered more health problems than his



siblings, as a result of which while they pursued various academic vocations he dedicated much of his life to art and natural history. The majority of his work featured Suffolk views, including several of Blaxhall, such as this view of Fir Tree Farm (Left) and (below) a wintry record of Church Cottages with Stone Common in the background.

The Blaxhall family tree is interesting not so much because it's unique, but because it's typical. Nowadays it is very much the norm to take a partner

who was born 20, 50 or 100 miles away, or even in another country, but 200 years ago, before the advent of rail travel, motor cars, buses, et al it was entirely normal to marry someone from the same village, or if you were very adventurous, someone from a neighbouring village 2 or 3 miles away. The inevitable result of this was that most residents of a typical rural village were related to each other, generally somewhere between 2nd cousins and 5th or 6th cousins.

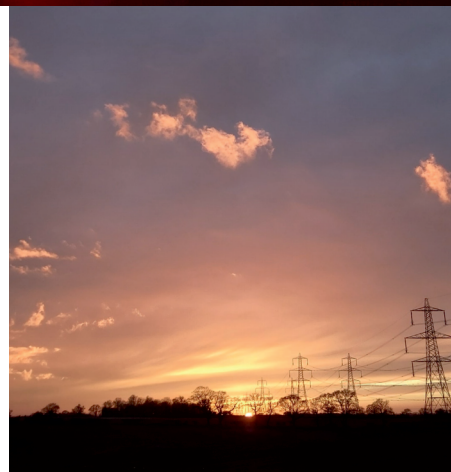
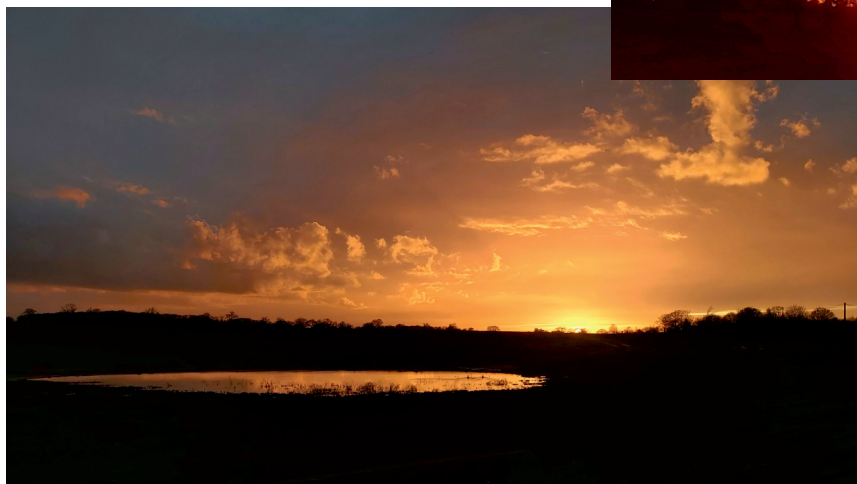
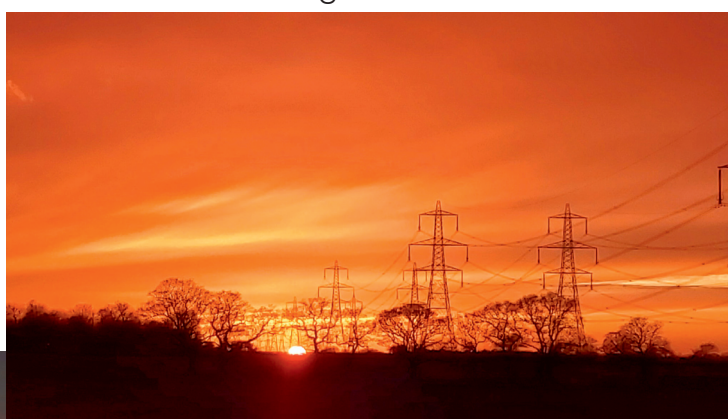
Whilst this is, of course, not a serious genetic problem (many kings and queens have been far more closely related!), it still comes as a bit of a shock to many people when they begin researching their family tree and discover, say, that two of their great, great grandfathers were brothers.

Join us (fingers crossed) at the village hall on 26/27 June for more.



Blaxhall Book Swap

Lockdown restrictions are easing but the book swap continues to thrive. The books are turning over at quite a rate so there is always a selection for every one's taste, be it cookery, gardening or a good novel to curl up with. There are jigsaws, CDs, DVDs and magazines as well as a table of items to help yourself to and plenty of space to relax while you make your choice. The books are sorted through every so often when we run out of space and the excess books are passed on to the Youth Hostel library or will be sold at the Fete in August.



Stunning sunsets

These three beautiful Blaxhall sunsets, together with our front-page shot of the church, were taken by regular photo contributor Malcolm Pearce.

From page 1 ...

Willing to face the harshest aquatic challenges, our light-hearted, yet courageous new resident (currently in dry-dock) already has something of a following, but is much in need of an appropriate moniker, so if you have any good suggestions do let us know and we'll be sure to pass it on!

Update from The Blaxhall Commons and Open Spaces Trust

Karen Baker, BCOST trustee, has written this brief history of our new acquisition, which we call Jasper's Pightle:

The land was acquired by Major Walter of Shepherd's Cottage in 1960, and he bred large white pigs on it for many years. As there was no mains water supply at the cottage, a pipe was laid under the road from the well and into the Arc building. From there it was piped along the roadside to various drinking stations for the pigs. If one looks carefully one can still see a few of these remaining.

On the large concrete area there were farrowing units. These were eventually sold and just the concrete pens left.

There is a mystery slab (approximately 4ft by 2ft) at the top of the North Track with "WL 1909" etched into it. Why is it there? What does WL stand for? One theory is William Lowther, who owned land at Campsea Ashe, but no other details are known.

Eventually the pig enterprise came to an end, and asparagus was grown at the Cottage end of the field. This was sold at various local outlets.

At the same time, in the early 1980s, a small caravan site was set up. Only five pitches could be allowed, and they were divided into areas by planting pines to give some privacy. It was fairly primitive but much enjoyed by all those who came, and many returned. Hard to believe that the narrow path opposite the cottage was the entrance to the site, and caravans trundled up and down the north track to the various pitches.



Unfortunately, when that came to an end the land became a haven for bracken which to this day has been a threat to the land, depriving it of nutrients and not allowing other wild plants to thrive on the acid soil. This is now being tackled with help from the Suffolk Wildlife Trust and a keen army of volunteers, and it is hoped to keep the bracken under control.

BCOST is raising funds to clear the asbestos from Jasper's Pightle, which will cost £7,500. We are delighted to report that thanks to grants from the Adnams Community Trust and the

Scarfe Charitable Trust, along with generous donations by friends and supporters, we have already raised £5,000. If you would like to help us raise the remaining £2,500, please send a cheque to Blaxhall Commons and Open Spaces Charitable Trust, c/o Vine Cottage, Ship Corner, Blaxhall, Suffolk IP12 2DY, or make a BACS payment to Blaxhall Commons & Open Spaces CT at the Co-operative Bank, a/c number account 65787067, sort code 08-92-99. We can also provide a gift aid form if needed. Thank you!

If you think you can help the trust in any other way, either as a trustee, friend or supporter, or if you know of someone outside the village who might like to know about our activities, please contact our Hon Secretary Eve Rossor at everossor@gmail.com (tel. 688648).



Parish Councillors

Graham Bowles	01728 688192 (Chairman)	Karen Baker	01728 688200
Shane Pictor	01728 688205	Ray Herring	01728 746337
Jonathan Cutting	01728 688003	Mark Oakley	01728 687507
Joanne Peters	01394 459400 (Parish Clerk)	Maggie Jennings	01728 687689

Suffolk Coastal District Councillor - Ray Herring 07885 249218

ray.herring@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Suffolk County Councillor - Andrew Reid 07545 423799 andrew.reid@suffolk.gov.uk

Copies of minutes and agendas can be found at <http://blaxhall.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/>

Parish Council meetings are held in the Village Hall at 7.30 and are open to all parishioners, the public and press. The 2021 dates are: **Wednesday 6th January, Wednesday 3rd March, Wednesday 5th May, Wednesday 7th July, Wednesday 1st September and Wednesday 3rd November.**

Community Transport – “Connecting Communities” **01728 635938** The service booking line operates 08.45am to 4pm, Mon-Fri

Blaxhall Commons & Open Spaces Charitable Trust – www.blaxhallcommonstrust.org
For contact details of all trustees ring Mark Oakley 01728 687507

The **Mobile Library** comes to Blaxhall, and stops at **The Youth Hostel 9.35 – 10am** calling every 4 weeks on Wednesdays: the remaining 2021 dates are **28 July, 25 August, 22 September, 20 October, 17 November, 15 December**

Large print, Audio & Childrens' books, also CDs and DVDs are available for a small charge. Contact Pete Wells or Helen Hudson on help@suffolklibraries.co.uk, visit the website <http://suffolkreads.onesuffolk.net/libraries-and-mobiles/> or phone **01473 584563**

To put something in the Village Noticeboard, please ring Graham Bowles 01728 688192
To put something in the Newsletter email to shane@blaxhall.com tel. 01728 688205

Allotment information contact Sophie Martin on 07724 356916,
Blaxhall.Allotments@gmail.com

Deadline for next Newsletter - 29th July